

Remarks

This is in response to the Office Action dated March 11, 2008.

Claims 1 and 3-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Rammler (US 5327891) and Sarkis (US5921933), alone in view of cited Kouik (US7014610) and further in view of Violante et al (US6106473).

It should be noted that both the earlier cited Sarkis and Rammler documents and the newly cited Violante (US6106573) describe echogenic coatings on a substrate.

The Violante document has a title "Echogenic Coatings" and it is entirely concerned with echogenic coatings applied to substrates (for example at col 2, lines 33-37; col 8, lines 33-38; col 9, line 66 – col 10, line 2; col 10, lines 8-11; col 10, lines 26-30; col 10, lines 45-46; and col 12, lines 51-53).

So, all the prior art arrangements teach that one starts with a substrate (of a conventional non-echogenic material) and then applies a coating of an echogenic material to this substrate.

By contrast, in the present invention, the main body or substrate of the device is itself echogenic. This avoids the need to apply a coating to a separately-formed body as in the prior art. In this way, the present invention avoids the disadvantages of coatings in increased manufacturing cost and added potential risk of detachment of the coating inside the patient's body.

The claims have been amended to emphasize the fact that the echogenic property of the claimed device is provided in the main body or substrate of the device rather than by a coating applied to a separate device.

Moreover, the amendments to Claims 1, 16 and 18 also define the fact that the thick layer is extruded with the gas bubbles, whereas the prior art describes the bubble layer as being applied as a coating on a substrate. The prior art does not teach this. The embryo transfer catheter of Claim 17 is not limited by extrusion.

In light of the foregoing, the examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the application and pass the same to issue at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,



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